



MicroStrategy Gets to Market Faster and Streamlines Installation

Goal: Offer customers the easiest installation and configuration process possible – and standardize internal testing and support processes.

Why they embed DataDirect: Clientless ODBC drivers simplify driver installation and configuration. Working with a single vendor for data connectivity streamlines the QA and Technical Support processes.

Business benefits: MicroStrategy customers can configure and deploy the BI platform much faster – resulting in smoother pilots and evaluations. Streamlined testing and QA of database connectivity gets MicroStrategy to market faster.

Technical benefits: Customers do not need to install the database client libraries – making installation markedly easier. Internally, using DataDirect drivers eliminates the complexity and workload of testing 3rd-party drivers from multiple database vendors.

"Customers have commented on the ease of deployment [DataDirect Connect for ODBC] drivers not only simplify the configuration for our customers, but they also enable MicroStrategy to reduce our support resources."

Samuel San
Labs Systems Engineering Manager
MicroStrategy

1-800-876-3101

For more information, go to:
www.datadirect.com

For more information on MicroStrategy,
go to: www.microstrategy.com

MicroStrategy 7i is the only Business Intelligence software to integrate the full range of reporting, analysis and information delivery capabilities into a single platform - providing central management of security, administration, development and deployment.

When developing MicroStrategy 7i, the company set the bar high: they wanted to offer their customers the easiest installation and configuration process possible. At the same time, they needed to streamline their internal testing and support processes.

Challenge #: True One-Button Installation

The development team at MicroStrategy had been tasked with simplifying the installation process of their BI platform. But the traditional approach to ODBC driver configuration made this challenging, because it included a separate installation step for each database's native library client software onto the MicroStrategy Intelligence Server™ machine.

The MicroStrategy Intelligence Server configuration process includes the use of administrative and configuration utilities, both of which need ODBC connections to be established in order to complete the deployment process. Previously, a user would have to take an extra step to contact the database vendors to obtain the client software (such as Oracle's Net9), in order to have MicroStrategy's products readily deployable. This extra step was often costly, and the client software was not always easily available to the user.

"It takes time for the user to obtain the right client software," said Samuel San, Labs Systems Engineering Manager at MicroStrategy Incorporated. "We were looking to provide users with one-button install capability."

The Solution: DataDirect Connect for ODBC

DataDirect's clientless (or wire protocol) ODBC drivers use the databases' native (proprietary) API for database access. Communicating across the wire protocol eliminates the necessity to install and configure the database vendor client libraries.

MicroStrategy implemented the wire protocol technology in a model that offers customers true one-button install capability for ODBC access. They created a GUI that asks installers to answer only a short list of questions to identify themselves. Users no longer have to open the ODBC Administrator and create data sources before using MicroStrategy products. In addition, any necessary testing now only occurs from one utility, the ODBC Test tool. This enhancement was introduced as part of the MicroStrategy 7i series.

"With DataDirect Connect for ODBC, we are able to give our Oracle customers out-of-the-box connectivity with MicroStrategy," said Samuel San. "Customers can now run the MicroStrategy installation, which includes DataDirect's ODBC drivers, and instantly connect with Oracle and other leading databases. By accessing the database's wire-protocol layer directly, these drivers not only simplify the configuration for our customers, but they also enable MicroStrategy to reduce our support resources."

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"Customers have commented on the ease of deployment," said San. Now, MicroStrategy users can easily create ODBC Data Sources for Sybase, Oracle and Informix using the built-in Configuration Wizard.

Challenge #2: Simplify and Shorten Testing Cycle

Core to the strength of the MicroStrategy Business Intelligence Platform is its breadth of database support. Implemented with the ODBC standard for database access opened up a myriad of deployment options for MicroStrategy customers.

However, it necessitated a complex set of testing and QA procedures - testing the business intelligence products with each database - including testing the ODBC driver from each database vendor.

Database vendors often release new drivers every other month - in some cases, more than once a month. This forced San's team to juggle its test and release cycles to meet the driver release schedules of the database vendors. It also meant that by the time MicroStrategy released the next version of its platform, the products would be certified to support an ODBC driver already ordained as "old" by the database vendor - even if it was the most appropriate driver for the MicroStrategy platform.

Additionally, MicroStrategy found that sometimes the "new" drivers weren't optimal for use with their BI tools. "It takes a lot of work to keep up with all the available ODBC drivers out there," said San of MicroStrategy.

They needed a single-source solution that could meet all of their ODBC needs – one that would not try to dictate which version MicroStrategy chose to ship.

The Solution: One Source for ODBC Drivers

DataDirect Technologies creates ODBC, JDBC, ADO and .NET drivers and providers for over 40 database versions, on all the major platforms. And because the drivers are rigorously tested in demanding environments, MicroStrategy doesn't have to worry about certifying new driver updates every few weeks.

Summary

Like MicroStrategy, hundreds of DataDirect Technologies' OEM customers take their products to market faster, maximize their potential customer base, and do it all with a smoother, smarter testing and Q&A process. With DataDirect Technologies' unique, streamlined ODBC architecture, application vendors can build products with less complicated administration and broad database support.